Roman Candle

Oh Tall Tree In the Ear

CARNIVAL RECORDING COMPANY

★★★½

By Jewly Hight

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It might sound like self-sabotage for a young-ish rock band to play songs that even hint at the notion that all the really moving music was made decades ago and youth is outdated, as Roman Candle do in “Why Modern Radio is A-OK” and “They Say.” But Skip, brother Logan and Logan’s wife Timshel Matheny mostly mention nostalgia in order to challenge it. The album title comes from poet Rainer Maria Rilke’s Sonnets To Orpheus, which heralds the mythical power of music. But these songs are no aloof literary exercise. The Chapel Hill-based band apply imagination to their roots-rock; songs take dynamic courses, melodies pop, electronic noise (almost too much of it at times) gives the proceedings a modern feel, and Skip sings with coiled, punchy energy. “Big Light” and “Heartbeat” make it clear that they want to feel something, and they don’t want do it alone. So it would seem that the music of a new generation hasn’t flat-lined after all.

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